



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Fact Sheet Active After-school Communities in Victoria — Playing for Life



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The majority of community coaches, schools and parents agree that children enjoy the Australian Government’s Active After-school Communities (AASC) program in Victoria.

The AASC program is a free initiative delivered nationally by the Australian Sports Commission. It has experienced a high level of success in Victoria, with one school saying, ‘You can tell the children enjoy themselves because they keep coming back’.

Another program deliverer credits the emphasis on ‘fun and variety’ as keeping the kids interested.

### Getting inactive children active in Victoria

Parents in Victoria are turning to the AASC program as a source of physical activity for their children. Over half the parents (58 per cent) surveyed say their child is participating because they want them to increase physical activity, improve fitness, learn new skills and improve motor skills.

A program deliverer from Lacrosse Victoria says the program is ‘great for the kids, because they get to run around a bit after school. It’s good for their fitness’.

The program is also increasing knowledge about the benefits of physical activity, with 84 per cent of schools and after-school care providers saying children and families are more aware of how physical activity can help improve their health and fitness.

A program deliverer with Colac Junior Badminton says it is rewarding to see children making progress with their physical fitness and coordination during the program. ‘A lot of them are not coordinated and when they start off, a lot of them wouldn’t have a clue what to do with a racquet and what to do with a shuttle.’

The AASC program also exposes children to a variety of sports they may not have otherwise been exposed to, giving them a broad range of physical activities to choose from, such as lawn bowls and martial arts.

A program deliverer with Tengu Ryu Martial Arts Academy in Olinda says children are exposed to a new level of discipline through martial arts. ‘That is actually quite positive for them because it’s delivered in such a way that it’s still fun and inclusive, but there are fairly well defined boundaries for them. They respond really positively to that. Respect is fundamental to martial arts.’

The broad range of sports on offer means children in Victoria have the opportunity to find a sport that suits them best. As a program deliverer at Lacrosse Victoria says, ‘I often find the kids who are not quite up to football or basketball or netball or the sports where school sports stars go well, those less sporty kids do well at lacrosse. So that gives them an alternative that they can do really well at’.

Wurruk Hockey Club has seen a change in children’s attitudes through the program. ‘When we first started, a lot of them were really only turning up cause they had to,’ one deliverer says, ‘but they look forward to it with enthusiasm now. I see them up the street and they say, “When are we starting hockey again” and “Are we playing this Saturday? Where are we playing?”’

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### **Strengthening communities in Victoria**

The AASC program is not only getting inactive kids active, it is also encouraging the wider community to get off the couch and exercise, with a majority of participating community coaches in Victoria (84 per cent) saying the program is stimulating community involvement in sport.

Lacrosse Victoria finds parents are contributing to the success of their AASC program. 'I've had ten parents come along to watch here Monday night,' a deliverer says, 'and one of the parents supplied the medals for an end of season break-up to all the kids who participated.'

Eighty-three per cent of Victorian community coaches also find the program has increased their capacity to provide sport to children.

Warrnambool Wolves Football Club puts AASC program training into practice with its coaches. 'I've picked up from the AASC program warm-up games that I hadn't used before,' one deliverer says.

Tengu Ryu Martial Arts Academy says the AASC program has also influenced their teaching style.

'The effect on instructors in our organisation has been to make them aware of child learning styles, particularly with respect to involvement and inclusiveness. I mean by "inclusiveness" children who would not necessarily stick with martial arts traditional learning styles of repetitive moves. They are really looking for a fun time.'

Many Victorian community coaches believe the program helps build their business through increased community links and membership.

A program deliverer with Lacrosse Victoria says it has strengthened their relationship with the local Council and the YMCA, which has helped the club with their playing grounds. Warrnambool Wolves Football Club also found the program strengthens its ties with local schools.

Chris Chandler Tennis Coaching says its membership has increased thanks to the program and the organisation 'definitely' has a stronger relationship with the local school which 'will put something in their newsletter about the tennis coaching'.

The AASC program is also helping to build the future of Victorian community sporting organisations. A program deliverer with Wurruk Hockey Club in Sale says the club has picked up a lot of junior players through the program. 'It's given us an opportunity to build our juniors up and start to build a future for the club.'

It is also giving community coaches further work outside their club, with a program deliverer from Geelong Softball Association saying schools ask if they would return and 'help coach their softball team, umpire their games and things like that'.

## **Active After-school Communities**

Helping kids and communities get active

For more information visit  
[ausport.gov.au/aasc](https://ausport.gov.au/aasc)

### **Facts at a glance**

- More than 64% of community coaches in Victoria agree the AASC program leads to more children joining local sporting clubs or sporting organisations
- 85% of parents in Victoria say children feel more positive towards physical activity after participating in the program
- 84% of schools and after-school care providers say children and families are more aware of how physical activity can help improve their health and fitness
- 90% of community coaches in Victoria say children of all ability levels feel welcome participating in the program
- 64% of schools and after-school care providers in Victoria say they do something special to encourage less active children to participate